

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - June 16, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that a federal grand jury sitting in San Diego today handed up a 39-count indictment charging Customs and Border Protection officer Michael Anthony Gilliland (“Gilliland”), Aurora Torres Lopez (Torres), Marina Perez de Garcia (Garcia), Patricia Santamaria, Salvador Zuniga-Torres, and Rosalba Raygoza-Romero with Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens, bribery and other charges.

According to the Indictment, Gilliland used his official position as a Customs and Border Protection Officer at the Otay Mesa Port of Entry to allow undocumented aliens to enter the United States, in violation of United States Immigration laws. In return for his participation, he received cash bribes. Gilliland, Torres and Garcia are each charged with bribery.

Specifically, the Indictment charges that Gilliland arranged with Aurora Torres Lopez and Marina Perez de Garcia specific days and times at which Gilliland would admit vehicles into the United States containing illegal aliens through his primary inspection lane. According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen

Tokarz, who is prosecuting the case, during this investigation agents intercepted telephone calls, pursuant to a lawful court order, where Gilliland discussed the specific smuggling plans with Torres and Garcia. Agents also surveilled Gilliland admitting vehicles containing illegal aliens into the United States. Agents with the Border Corruption Task Force executed search warrants following the arrests of defendants and found approximately \$458,000 in U.S. currency at Torres' house, \$60,800 at Garcia's house, and \$5,700 at Gilliland's house.

The defendants are expected to be arraigned on the Indictment at their upcoming court appearances. Gilliland has a bail hearing set for 2:30 p.m. this afternoon before Magistrate Judge William McCurine and is expected to be arraigned at that time.

U.S. Attorney Lam said, "A law enforcement officer holds a position of trust in our community. We are all diminished when a federal law enforcement officer egregiously violates the public's trust."

DEFENDANTS

Michael Anthony Gilliland

Aurora Torres Lopez

Marina Perez de Garcia

Patricia Santamaria

Salvador Zuniga-Torres

Rosalba Raygoza-Romero

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Count: 1

Charges: Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain
Title18, United States Code, Section 371.
Maximum Penalty: 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count.

Counts: 2-7, 14-22

Charges: Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain
Title 8 , United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii).
Maximum Penalty: 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count.

Counts: 8-13, 23-31

Charges: Transportation of Illegal Aliens
Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii) and (v)(II) .
Maximum Penalty: 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count.

Count: 32

Charges: Aiding or Assisting Certain Aliens to Enter the United States
Title 8, United States Code, Section 1327.
Maximum Penalty: 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count.

Counts: 33-36

Charges: Harboring Illegal Aliens
Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii).
Maximum Penalty: 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count.

Counts: 37-39

Charges: Bribery of a Public Official
Title 18, United States Code, Section 201(b)(2)(A) and(C) and (b)(1)(A) and (C).
Maximum Penalty: 15 years in prison and a fine not to exceed three times the monetary amount of the bribe.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Immigration and Customs Enforcement - Office of Professional Responsibility

United States Border Patrol

Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General

Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation

San Diego Police Department

Chula Vista Police Department

Long Beach Police Department

An indictment is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.